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SUBMISSION OF THE  
PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA  
TO THE DECEMBER 1969  
CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE



AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES OF MINISTERS  
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

1. Mr. Chairman, in an effort to assist in the further development of Canadian unity, Nova Scotia has considered the recommendations of Volume 2 of the B and B report in the context of its possible applications to Nova Scotia.

2. We have stated our position on these matters at meetings on official languages of Ministers and officials, and at the two main Constitutional Conferences, as follows:

First

We want to provide opportunities for our French minority language students in Nova Scotia to the same extent as Quebec is providing for its English minority language students.

Second

We are interested in improving the quality and scope of the teaching of French and subjects in French in all our schools to the degree that our people desire it and the local authorities request.

3. Some time ago as a means to discover the full financial and educational implications of a program designed to help meet these objectives, Nova Scotia worked out in conjunction with our appropriate local authorities a pilot project in the development of which we agreed to share the resulting costs. This proposal was presented to and received favourable comment from the sub-committee on official languages. It was also presented at the last Prime Minister's Conference and a specific request was made at that time for a federal decision on the matter.

4. We have not thus far received an indication of federal willingness to proceed with this pilot project. The project was designed to provide helpful information to us and to the federal people and for the use of others. Instead, along with all the other provinces, we were presented with a proposal from the Government of Canada at the meeting of the ministers on official languages on November 6th past. We are still trying earnestly to understand the extent of the proposal's application to the Nova Scotia context. We hope we may soon find out what it means in terms of its application to us, and we will of course be having further discussions with your people in this regard. It is by no means clear to us at the moment as to the manner in which we can qualify under the terms of the proposal.

5. Mr. Chairman, Nova Scotia is anxious and willing to cooperate in any venture that will help further develop Canadian unity. We are, however, unfortunately not in a position to institute costly programs of any type without some previous objective knowledge upon which to determine the short-term and long-term costs.

6. We recognize the need to improve the quality of the French language in Nova Scotia. But we must not do it in such a way as to provide economic hardships to the people concerned. It is our goal to prepare people in the best way possible to fit into the economic and social environment in which they live. An artistry of development is needed that only experience can bring, and we must be prepared to try to find, over time and through this experience, the best way of attaining this goal.